



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE'S EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS PLAN APPROVED

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The United States Department of Education (USED) has approved Kentucky's plan to ensure equitable access to effective, engaging educators for all students.

As part of the [Excellent Educators for All Initiative](#) and as required by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), last year USED asked states to create new, comprehensive plans that put in place locally-developed solutions to ensure every student – regardless of race, ethnicity or national origin, zip code, wealth, or first language – would have equal access to excellent educators, and that all teachers and principals have the resources and support they need to help students reach their full potential.

"Kentucky's state plan represents an important step toward these goals and to ensuring that all students have access to excellent, well-supported educators," wrote Ann Whalen of the USED Office of Elementary and Secondary Education in an approval letter sent to the Kentucky Department of Education this week.

"Unfortunately, family income and race continue too often to dictate a student's likelihood of attending a great school staffed by exceptional educators," the letter stated.

Research has shown that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. While, 99.5 percent of all courses in Kentucky are taught by highly qualified teachers, Kentucky data does show equity gaps. There are disproportionate numbers of new teachers and higher turnover rates at high poverty, high minority and lower achieving schools. At these schools, students may have a new teacher multiple years and potentially for consecutive years. As a result, students often have great difficulty in making the academic gains of their peers.

In addition to the federal requirement of ensuring equitable access for minority students and students of poverty, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) also included students with disabilities and English Language Learners in its plan.

"Kentucky is committed to all students getting a high-quality, world-class education," Interim Commissioner Kevin Brown said. "Our students deserve it; our economic future demands it. Inequity simply doesn't have a place in public education."

(more)

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Kentucky's plan to eliminate identified equity gaps includes strategies focused on:

- recruitment, hiring and placement
- ongoing, job-embedded professional learning
- evaluation of educators
- retention

As an example, Kentucky will be working to support, strengthen and modify teacher preparation programs to help ensure that all teachers are ready to provide high-quality instruction to their students, and are prepared for success in high-need schools. Specifically, the state plans on using regional effectiveness coaches to work with educator preparation programs to help inform teacher education faculty regarding new standards, teacher and leader evaluation systems, and teacher leadership.

It is important to note that neither the USED nor the KDE is advocating “forced transfers” of teachers or principals.

As part of its plan, the state is required to measure and evaluate progress on eliminating equity gaps, so starting in October, Kentucky's online school report card will include an equity tab that will report measures for:

- working conditions
- overall teacher and principal effectiveness
- overall teacher and principal growth rating
- total percent of first year and Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) teachers in all schools
- teacher turnover rate

The Kentucky Department of Education has been working to gather input from various stakeholder groups to develop the state plan since October 2014. Kentucky's full plan is available on the KDE website:

<http://education.ky.gov/teachers/PGES/Documents/Teacher%20Equity%20Plan.pdf>.

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